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SUBJECT: CHINESE ASSISTANCE TO ANGOLA FOCUSED ON HEALTH

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11. (SBU) Summary. During an initial call on Counselor Ding Shan at the Chinese Embassy, the USAID Mission Director and Ding compared the U.S. and Chinese assistance efforts in Angola, which both emphasize health. Ding also disclosed China will soon start sending "barefoot doctors" to work in Angola's province and has ongoing programs to train Angolan doctors, in Portuguese, in China's Sichuan Province. End Summary.

12. (SBU) On 23 August 2007, incoming USAID Mission Director, accompanied by Econoff, met with Chinese Embassy Counselor Shan Ding at the Chinese Embassy, as one of a series of visits to foreign assistance counterparts in Luanda. The meeting provided an opportunity to compare U.S. and Chinese assistance programs in Angola and test the waters for future cooperation. The Chinese program Ding described, like the USAID program, emphasizes health care, but also features training and providing skilled Chinese professionals to work in Angola.

A Rapidly Growing Bilateral Relationship

13. (SBU) Ding described a Chinese official relationship with Angola that has evolved rapidly over the last 5 years, especially as Chinese construction firms have come to play a major role in rebuilding Angola's infrastructure. Ding had met former Ambassador David Shinn the previous week, during Shinn's privately-sponsored tour of several African countries to research a planned report about Chinese influence in Africa. Ding told Econoffs they discussed the potential for increased cooperation between China and the United States on agriculture and health.

Chinese Assistance to Angola - Health

14. (SBU) This year, China provided USD 400,000 to the GRA to help the fight against malaria, Marburg and other diseases. Under a bilateral agreement, the funds purchase Chinese medical supplies and equipment. One medication is a new anti-malaria drug developed in China, Ding said, called Qinghaosu in Chinese, Arteannuin in English (Note: Chengdu Okay Plant and Chemical Company has posted Arteannuin's chemical structure and scientific name on the web, describing it as an artemisinin. End note.)

¶5. (SBU) China is now building hospitals, health centers and schools in 16 of Angola's 18 provinces, and its program is evolving. When Angolan Prime Minister Fernando dos Santos's visited Beijing in November 2006, he signed a bilateral agreement to bring Chinese doctors to serve two-year tours in Angola's rural areas, Ding explained. The first group of 12 physicians should arrive in September 2007 and will include two experts in Chinese traditional medicine, an acupuncturist, and a therapeutic masseur. In addition, China last year trained 36 Angolan doctors in Sichuan Province, conducting their training in English and Portuguese, thanks to China's Portuguese-language institute in the province, Ding related.

USAID Programs in Angola

¶6. (SBU) USAID Director summarized the USG foreign assistance program in Angola, explaining its emphasis on health, especially efforts to combat malaria under the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) and AIDS under the President's Emergency Plan for Aids Relief (PEPFAR) She explained that health initiatives account for over USD 24 million of USAID's USD 35 million budget for Angola. USAID Angola also works closely with private corporations in Angola, and they have increased USAID funding by USD 5 million. In addition to health programs, USAID also manages programs to encourage democracy and governance, and economic growth. The last includes programs to improve access to credit and agricultural development, exactly the area where China and the United States hope to develop a common program.

Ding on China's Impact

¶7. (SBU) Ding suggested that, unlike Western firms doing business in Angola, Chinese firms do not take on Corporate Social Responsibility programs while doing business in

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Angola. Although China's engagement, unlike USAID's, does not involve working with NGOs, Ding pointed to the visible Chinese construction firms and commercial enterprises, suggesting that they also benefit Angolan society through their engagement. Ding expressed continued Chinese interest in a bilateral program as discussed reftel, but indicated he preferred to act on suggestions from the U.S. side.

Comment

¶8. (SBU) Although the nature of China's assistance program to Angola presents challenges to designing a viable joint program, we will continue to meet with Ding and his counterparts to explore possibilities.
FERNANDEZ